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Senate

(Legislative day of Tuesday, September 21, 2021)

The Senate met at 10 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, whose plans stand firm forever, You test the motives of our hearts. Today, give our lawmakers such ethical consistency that their motives will remain pure. May love for You become the dominant motivation for all they think, say, and do.

As they strive to live according to Your precepts, fill their hearts with songs of gratitude. Lord, remind them that this day is a gift from You, so they should rejoice because of the blessing of another sunrise.

We pray in Your generous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, September 22, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. LUJÁN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday evening, the House of Representatives approved a continuing resolution that will keep the government open through December, provide emergency funding for Afghan refugees and Americans affected by natural disasters, and suspend the debt ceiling through the end of 2022.

The bill now comes to the Senate, where both parties must pass it together to steer the United States away from a number of fast-approaching crises. Absent congressional action, the government will shut down in just over a week. The United States could face a first-ever default soon thereafter, and

it will be American families who will suffer most.

Now our Republican colleagues say they don't want a shutdown. They say they don't want a credit default. They say they want hurricane aid. Then they should vote yes on this bill.

You want to avoid a default, Republican colleagues? Vote yes.

You want to avoid a government shutdown? Vote yes.

You want to provide hurricane aid? Vote yes.

You want to help the Afghan refugees? Vote yes.

That is the bill that will be on the floor. Those who will vote yes will vote to avoid default, to avoid a government shutdown.

Those who vote no will be saying: We are OK with default and we are OK with a government shutdown.

To say, "Do it another way," that doesn't cut it. This is what is on the floor. This is what the House passed. And, again, the kind of sophistry that we have heard from the Republican leader doesn't make any sense, either through past history or through practicality and what we need today.

At the end of the day, it is how we vote that matters most. Our constituents sent us here to vote, plain and simple. So Republicans face a choice. Vote yes to pay our bills and keep the government open; or vote no, which means you are OK with default and a government shutdown.

Every single Democrat will support this bill. Whether or not we avoid default is simply entirely up to the Republican Senators. It is up to them, plain and simple.

The President has the proposal. The House has passed the proposal. I will put that proposal on the Senate floor.

And remember, this is not just a political fight. The last time Republicans played with the debt ceiling in 2011, the credit of the United States was downgraded for the first time ever. And all

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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